Summary of the Occupational Health Program for Personnel with Substantial Laboratory Animal Contact (LAOHP)

Purpose

The purpose of the program is to identify, evaluate, manage, and reduce potential health risks associated with the care and use of animals. By assessing an individual's risks, recommendations to prevent illness related to laboratory animal research can be made.

Introduction

Working with laboratory animals can present risks to the health and well-being of research personnel and other individuals that may have animal contact or even casual exposure. Examples of health risks may include:

- Zoonotic diseases (infectious agents shared by humans and animals)
- Allergies to laboratory animals, particularly rodents
- Bites, scratches, and other injuries
- Manipulation of hazardous materials in animals

Only a physician (e.g. PLHCP) or other medical professional may assess the health of laboratory personnel to do work. These care providers may also provide allergy monitoring, zoonosis surveillance, testing, and related medical care. EHS provides recommendations only, for seeking care and hazard reduction based on reported and observed data.

General Guidelines

Enrollment in the Program

All personnel with contact or exposure to laboratory animals must enroll in the Occupational Health Program via submission of the online LAOHP questionnaire. Submission of the form is mandatory; however, for those that prefer not to participate in the program, they may opt out of the health-related questions on the questionnaire*. All completed LAOHP questionnaires are reviewed by Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), during which they make recommendations to prevent illness and/or recommend referrals for additional medical care based on the information provided.

Towson University is contracted with Concentra Occupational Health to provide immunizations/vaccinations, which may be recommended for work with laboratory animals. The appropriate forms for vaccination or declination must be submitted to EHS prior to work. Concentra Occupational Health also provides physical examinations, drug testing, urgent care, and workplace injury services for employees. Concentra has several locations in the State of Maryland; the closest to Towson University's main campus is 1830 York Road, Suite F, Timonium, MD 21093.

All individuals working with animals or listed on IACUC protocols must enroll* in the LAOHP. This includes:

- Anyone listed on an IACUC protocol as research personnel.
- Anyone working with animals for research, testing, or teaching purposes.
- Anyone having contact or exposure to laboratory animals (including casual exposure); and
- Anyone entering Vivarium facilities

***Note: Enrollment consists of annual submission of the LAOHP questionnaire, but you do not have to provide personal health information if you do not wish to do so.**

Everyone involved with laboratory animals must submit a new LAOHP form:

- Before being added to or listed on an IACUC protocol.
- Before first contact with laboratory animals.
- Whenever there is a change in health status (e.g., worsening allergies, pregnancy, diagnosis of an immune disorder, etc.).
- Whenever exposure information changes (e.g., a new animal model is introduced in the lab).
- At least once per year.

Individuals shall report injuries, illnesses, allergic reactions, or other exposures related to animal work to assist in medical surveillance. Personnel will enroll in appropriate training for their performed tasks. Individuals will also use general precautions, engineering controls, other administrative controls, and personal protective equipment to reduce their risk of exposure to illness, injury, or other incidents. In case of emergency, individuals will follow instructions for first aid and reporting contained in the LAOHP.

Resources

For more information about the risks associated with exposure to laboratory animals, contact EHS at (410) 704-2949. Information related to laboratory hazards can be found by visiting the EHS webpage.

Note: The following are suggested medical care facilities. Individuals may choose their own providers for medical care.

For major, immediate illness/injuries: Call 911 and/or go to the nearest hospital (UMD St. Joseph Medical Center, 7601 Osler Drive, Towson, MD 21204)

For minor injuries/illnesses and chronic/ongoing work-related injuries:
Students:
TU Health Center is open on Monday-Friday, 8:00AM-5:00PM. (Ward West, University Avenue; TU Shuttle Bus service stops here, check schedule for times/stops). Please note that

when Towson University is closed, the Health Center is also closed. There is an after-hours answering service and on-call physician available when the center is closed.

Employees:
Concentra Occupational Health is open on Monday-Friday, 7:30AM-6:00PM (Concentra Occupational Health, 1830 York Road, Suite F, Timonium, MD 21093; Phone: 410-252-4015). Complimentary transportation is available for work-related injuries. You may also make a telemedicine visit: by visiting Concentra Telemed.

Other Nearby Medical Facilities:
MedStar Urgent Care Facility (MHUC) at the following locations:

- Towson at Hillside Avenue is open on Monday-Friday, 8:00AM-8:00PM (MedStar Urgent Care, 7825 York Road, Towson, MD 21204; Phone: 855-910-3278)
- Towson at Anneslie is open on Monday-Friday, 8:00AM-8:00PM (MedStar Urgent Care, 6317 York Road, Towson, MD 21212; Phone: 833-735-1958)